

# *POINTS OF INTEREST*

*ABOUT*

## *NIAGARA*




HISTORICAL BUILDING

**Niagara Historical Society**

*Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.*





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2024 with funding from  
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/pointsofinterest00niag>



# POINTS OF INTEREST

---

The Niagara Historical Society has been asked to print some reliable information as to points of interest and the following has been prepared to use as a folder to give information to the passing stranger or to send in letters to friends at a distance.

Under the names of Ouinagara, Ongiara, Butlersburg, Nassau, Lennox, West Niagara, Newark, Niagara and Niagara-on-the-Lake, has our town been known. It has much of historic interest as well as beautiful scenery. Niagara was at different times a legislative, military, educational, commercial, naval and social centre, the centre too, of the Indian trade and the refuge of the escaped slave. Niagara can lay claim to having had the first Parliament for Upper Canada 1792, the first newspaper 1793, the first Agricultural Society 1792, two of the first churches, 1794 and 1804, the first library 1800, the first Law Society 1797, and one of the first Grammar Schools, 1808. To the historian the town must ever be of interest, the scene of a battle, in the hands of the enemy, a smoking ruin and again phoenix-like rising from its ashes. Its natural advantages are also remarkable, the far stretching lake, the blue river, forts, lighthouse, old elms, sycamores, broad streets, and in sight forest and plain, vineyards and orchards. All this may surely justify us in claiming, like St. Paul, that "we are citizens of no mean city." Besides all this there are many advantages for the tourist, excellent fishing, golf and tennis grounds, easy communication with Toronto, the Falls, Buffalo by steamer, train and electric car.

The chief points of interest are **FORT GEORGE** built in 1794. Here resided Sir Isaac Brock in 1804 and 1811 and 1812. Here also he was buried from 1812 to 1824. The old powder magazine built in 1796 is at the south end. Here the Americans after taking the town 27th May, 1813 had their quarters till 10th Dec., 1813. The Lonely Sycamore has been commemorated in verse. **NAVY HALL** in 1787 consisted of three or four buildings. One of these was fitted up for the residence of Governor Simcoe in 1792 and another for Parliament. It has long been a disputed point where Parliament met but from old records, the tales of old residents, it is certain that it met in different places, a marquee tent, under the Parliament Oak, the Indian Council House, Butler's Barracks, Navy Hall, but it has lately been shown from the statement of Littlehale that the first meeting was in the Free Mason's Hall, on the site of the present Masonic Hall. The building known by the name of Navy Hall, it is now claimed was not built till 1816. It was used as a storehouse, then as a barracks for 56 men, next moved up from its position nearer the water on account of the cutting for railway purposes in 1855, became an almost total ruin and in 1911 was restored by a grant from the Dominion Government by petition from our Historical Society, and has been used for sanitary and other purposes by the Military Camp. The race course on the Military Reserve (of 443 acres) was made by the Turf Club, consisting of British officers in 1797.

**BUTLER'S BARRACKS**, it is claimed by some was burned in 1813, but we know that Dr. Dunlop waited on 200 wounded there, the day after the battle of Lundy's Lane, 25th July, 1814.



**ST. MARK'S CHURCH**, the nave of which was built 1804-1808 was used as a hospital by the British after the battle of Queenston Heights, 1812, and by the Americans as a barracks in 1813, restored in 1826, and the chancel built in 1843. There are many interesting and historic tablets and memorial windows. The beautiful stained glass window in the chancel with chaste subdued colors is said to have been the earliest placed in Ontario. The centenary of the congregation was held in 1892 and it was shown that in the hundred years there had been only three incumbents. The Rev. R. Addison who came as a missionary in 1792 became the minister till 1829, the Rev. Thos. Creen, Rector till 1856, Rev. Arch Deacon McMurray till 1894. The present Rector, Rev. Canon Garrett was Curate in charge and Rector for twenty-nine years, till 1918. (Now Rev. C. H. E. Smith.) There is a beautifully kept old record from 1792 to 1829.

**ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH**, built in 1831 to replace the church built in the same spot in 1794 which was burnt in the war of 1812-14. The congregation worshipped in the school house when repaired, now the sexton's house. The first Sunday school (Union) was held there from 1819. An old record book carefully kept dates from 1794. The plot of four acres was granted in 1794 and that for the Manse in 1831. Among the ministers were Rev. R. McGill, D.D., and Rev. J. B. Mowat, M.A., D.D. who became professor in Queen's University. The handsome pulpit has been much admired. The present pastor is Rev. A. F. MacGregor, B.A. The centenary was held in 1894.

**FORT MISSISSAUGA**, built in 1814 partly from the ruins of the town burned in 1813. Here and along the shore the Americans landed 27th May, 1813.

**MASONIC HALL**, formerly called the Stone Barracks built in 1816, partly from the ruins of the town, has been used as a store, a hotel, a school house, a barracks, is on the site of the first Masonic Hall, as proved by records, lot 33, although from permission given in 1791 it was thought to be near the river at the end of King Street.

**GAOL AND COURT HOUSE**, built in 1817 was described by Goldie, a botanist in 1819, as the finest building in Upper Canada. Robert Gourlay the "Banished Briton" was a prisoner there then. It was the scene of what was called a riot in 1838 when the colored people of the town of whom there were several hundred, mostly escaped slaves rescued Moseby, who had escaped from Kentucky and was to be returned on a charge of stealing a horse, to escape. The riot act was read and two black men were killed but Moseby escaped. When the county town was changed the building was bought by Miss Rye in 1869 and became the Western Home and is now 1918, occupied by Polish troops in training.

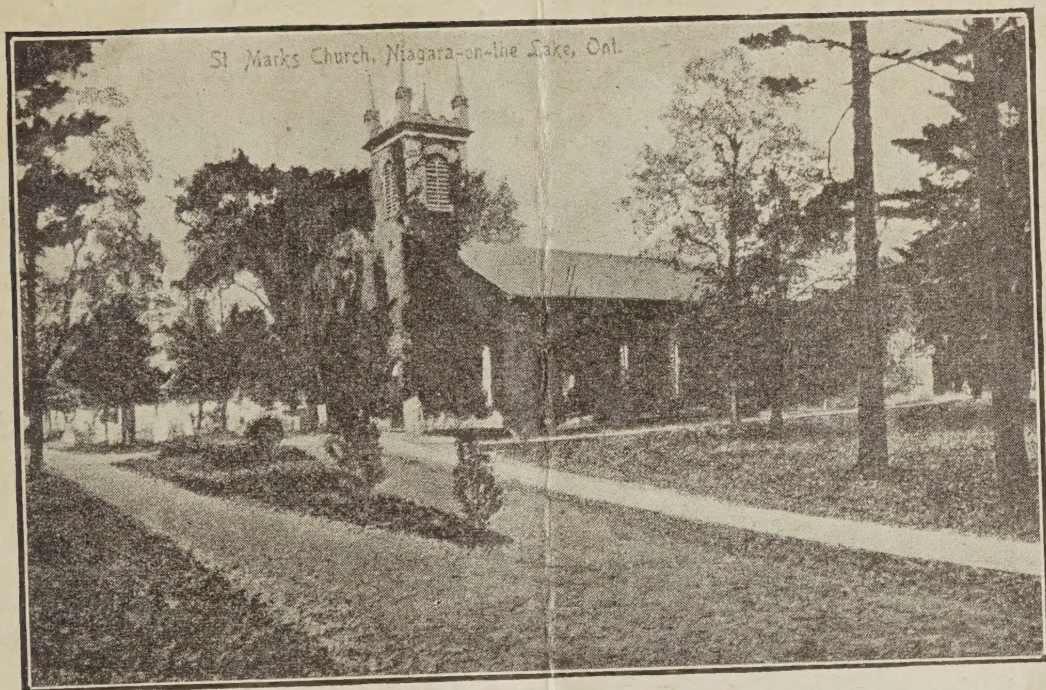
**THE WILDERNESS** was given to Mrs. Daniel Claus, the daughter of Sir Wm. Johnson, by the Indians who gave up land to purchase it. Here Indians came to receive their presents. Here in what was called the "Pitt" many took refuge when the town was burned. The present building was erected in 1816. There are many fine old trees, one a Balm of Gilead, said to have been from its height a guide to fishermen on the lake in early times.

**THE FRENCH THORNS** which form a fringe to the Oak Grove are said to owe their existence to slips planted by French officers from Fort Niagara. Wm. Kirby in his Canadian Idylls has given the legend in a ballad in the "Queen's Birthday."

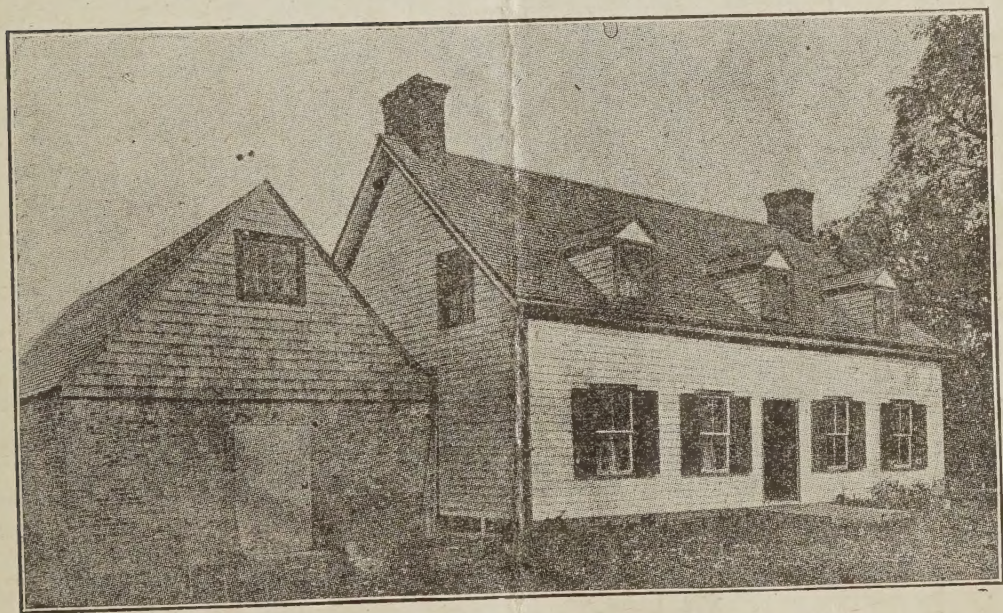
**COUNT DE PUISAYE'S HOME**, on the river road was a long, low building with many dormer windows, is in good repair but is only half the length of the original. The Count was a French refugee assisted by England to form a military colony in Canada which however did not succeed. It was built in 1799. Here he resided till 1802 when he returned to England. The brick building attached has been variously called a wine vault, a dairy, a powder magazine, a storehouse, as here was a store in 1802.

**THE McFARLAND HOUSE**, built in 1800 from bricks made in a kiln





ST. MARK'S CHURCH



COUNT DE PUISAYE'S HOUSE



near, was used as a hospital for a short time in 1812. John McFarland was sent a prisoner to Greenbush, although a non-combatant.

**ST. VINCENT DE PAUL'S CHURCH** was built in 1834 and has records dating to 1827. The present pastor is Father Sweeney.

**PUBLIC LIBRARY**, founded in 1848 has quarters in the court house, built in 1847 and contains 8000 volumes.

**CROOKSTON** at the One Mile Creek was owned by the Crook's family, was for some time called Chautauqua, when meetings were held in the amphitheatre.

**QUEEN'S ROYAL HOTEL**, built in 1868 with a view commanding lake, river and forts has excellent tennis and bowling lawns. Here many societies and clubs meet. The grounds have fine old forest trees. The engineers' quarters were here originally.

**HISTORICAL BUILDING**, erected in 1906, formally opened in 1907 by Sir Mortimer Clark, the Lieutenant Governor, 4th June, 1907. The building contains over 6,000 articles of historic interest, tablets to U. E. Loyalists and other early settlers, and British regiments quartered here. The Society was formed in December, 1895 and has printed thirty pamphlets, relating to Niagara and vicinity. Thousands of visitors have testified to the value of the collection.

**FORT NIAGARA**, across the river is a most interesting spot. Visited by La Salle in 1679, the fort was built by the French in 1725, taken by assault by the British in 1759, by Sir Wm. Johnson, given up by treaty in 1796, taken by assault by the British in 1813 and given up by treaty in 1815. The military graveyard has many interesting inscriptions.

**QUEENSTON HEIGHTS**, seven miles distant where the battle was fought, 13th October, 1812. The first monument to General Brock was erected in 1824, but blown up in 1840. The present monument, erected in 1853. It is believed there is no such monument on so grand a site in the world, commanding river, lake, and plain. There is also a monument to Laura Ingersoll Secord, placed in 1911, who walked nineteen miles in 1813 to give warning at Beaver Dams.

**PALATINE HALL**, the home of Daniel Servos, in 1784, commands a fine view. One of the earliest mills was here and many treasured military and other relics are preserved in the house which contains two of the original rooms.

**THE METHODIST CHURCH**, was originally built by the Free or Canada Presbyterian Church in 1852, but on the union of the two churches was bought by the Methodists of the town who had worshipped in a building erected in 1823. The present pastor is Rev. Dr. McArthur.

There was also a church for the colored people built in 1829 as there was then a large negro population.

**BUTLER'S FAMILY GRAVEYARD**, about a mile from the town has the remains of members of the Butler, Claus, Clench, Freel, and Muirhead families. Efforts have been made to have it properly taken care of and the Niagara Falls Park Commissioners have placed a fence round it, and obtained a right of way but many of the stones have been broken.

**PUBLIC SCHOOL**, a substantial brick building erected in 1859, has four teachers and the **HIGH SCHOOL** built in 1875 dates its history from 1808, the fourth formed in the province, the three previous being Kingston, Cornwall and York 1807. The centenary was held in 1908.

The beautiful residences with magnificent old trees, at the south corner of the town were formerly owned by the Dickson and Melville families, and were called Wood Lawn, Rowan Wood and Brunswick Place, now called Rand Wood and Pinehurst. The Hon. Wm. Dickson tells in a letter to Governor Simcoe, in 1794, that he had built the first brick house in the province. The graveyards of the town and vicinity give much history of the past. In St. Mark's the trenches cut by the Americans in 1813, the flat stone hacked by their hatchets cutting meat, the stones in memory of old soldiers and United Empire Loyalists there and in



St. Andrew's and many family graveyards keep in memory those who came in early years, sometimes through hardships to an almost wilderness.

Eleven markers have been placed by the Historical Society at many of the places mentioned, the three points not spoken of being the site of Government House 1812, Indian Council House and Brown's Point, where Brock is said to have called out "Push on York Volunteers," 13th October, 1812.

*Janet Carnochan*



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH



